



# Hamilton County

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## Hamilton County 2016 Policy Budget

*By: Hamilton County Commissioner Todd Portune  
November 16, 2015*

### I. Introduction and Executive Summary

2016 offers Hamilton County the kind of unexpected, yet long needed, opportunity to access resources that will Grow the County and pave the way for a successful decade of opportunity.

For too long we have suffered the ill effects of the Great Recession. With almost 35% loss of real revenue Hamilton County has been forced to do much more with less. We found a way to provide a full menu of critical and necessary services without breaking the bank. Instead of closing the door to essential assistance, we balanced the budget; increased our reserves and launched multiple new creative and innovative initiatives that are making a difference in making Hamilton County safer, healthier and more robust economically.

In fact the county's story is almost heroic. In the face of such budget adversity Hamilton County:

- Broke ground on the Banks and maintained an unbroken record of new development that is fulfilling the original promise made when Fort Washington Way was narrowed and downtown was reconnected to the central riverfront.
- Launched a new Department of Re-Entry that is breaking the revolving door at the Justice Center and is, instead, producing results where county felons that have repaid society are gaining employment and becoming productive, reliable citizens.
- Targeted the scandal of infant mortality with a new initiative that is saving lives and empowering new and expectant mothers with the knowledge and tools they need to keep their newborns alive well beyond their first birthdays.
- Sparking new economic development to the four corners of the county through a reformed Port Authority; a newly Created Land Bank and Transportation Improvement District Strategies that are together providing the building blocks required to implement the region's adopted strategy aimed at marketing Hamilton County as the inland global port of choice for the movement of freight through North America and the jobs that come with this new market driven formula for success.

We stand at a point where the Progress we have begun cannot wait to take the next step. Our 2016 Budget must place a bold stamp of approval on all of the building blocks to a successful future.

At the same time, you can also say that we are two Hamilton Counties. This year four reports were released that cannot be ignored. Key indicators have been identified in the separate reports compiled by the Urban League [State of Black Cincinnati]; Hamilton County General Health District [Place Matters – inequitable delivery of health care depending upon place of residence]; and United Ways [Key Indicators and “Bold Goals”] for the region; and the Chamber of Commerce, Agenda 360, Urban Land Institute and Skyward Regional Indicators Report on Transit. My budget begins to address a number of the priority findings in these Reports and I am further calling upon us as a Board to commission

a process whereby we engage the authors of each report to discern how we might better attack the causes of the findings in each by the end of June 2016 and commit to revisit capacities in our budget to begin to further address such items.

## **II. Policy Budget Goals and Indicators**

The Hamilton County Budget I am proposing builds on our prior accomplishments and calls upon us as a Board to work together across party lines to build and grow a county of opportunity.

Our approach needs to be continuous and uncompromising so that when we reach our next milestone in the county [the County's Sesquicentennial, or 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration] we will be ready.

There are three primary areas of focus that must guide our budgeting and our focus. They are:

- A. Creating a vibrant economy in Hamilton County.** To accomplish this we have to endorse and adopt an agenda that grows the county. Key indicators that guide us are that:
- We lack sufficient shovel ready and available space to market to new industrial and commercial users.
  - Where we do have space available [i.e. Harrison Commerce Park, or Anchor development site] we lack transportation access to the sites; and
  - Only 58% of jobs in the region are accessible by transit – the lowest percentage of any of our eleven peer competitor regions; and
  - The Chamber's regional indicators and Connections Report reveals the need for expanding the multi-modal and integrated nature transportation in the region and of

preserving the regions' existing rail corridors for use as both rail and trail.

- Despite years of preparation and advocacy the Brent Spence Bridge remains a chokehold in the region and a detriment to growing the local economy.
- Our regional priority of marketing the region as an inland port of choice for the movement of freight and goods throughout North America is at its most critical juncture and requires bold action that serves as a symbol of the region's commitment around the priority to make it happen,
- Only 2.3 % of jobs in the region are accessed by pedestrian or bicycle trails; and
- We have an unemployment rate of over 80% of the disabled in the county that corresponds with the lack of adequate and available transportation service for the disabled; and

## **B. Improving the General Health and Welfare of the County.**

To accomplish this we have to endorse and adopt an agenda that grows the county. Key indicators that guide us are that:

- We have a poverty rate in the county exceeding 17% overall; over 120,000 people in the county are on food stamps; and over 44% of all African American Children live in poverty.
- In addition to the county wide poverty rate there remain too many people employed at Hamilton County who suffer salaries that place them at or below the federal poverty level.

- Despite the progress made over the past two years under Cradle Cincinnati, our Infant Mortality Rate remains unacceptably high; and
- Too many people lack access to proper Dental Care and fail to exercise appropriate oral hygiene leading to much greater and more dangerous health consequences, including fatalities; and
- The county's Cancer rate and fatality rate among cancer victims is the largest in the tri-state and greatest among those who lack the ability to navigate the health care systems in the region.

**C. Continuing the Progress we have made in making the County a Safer Place to live and work and play.**

To accomplish this we have to endorse and adopt an agenda that grows the county. Key indicators that guide us are that:

- Trust in law enforcement is a critical aspect of a safe community. Recent incidents of police related shootings have inevitably led to community anger, protest and the possibility of civil unrest.
- After working for years to create a universal emergency communications system and to eliminate fragmentation in emergency dispatch, the proliferation of cell phones is creating fragmentation anew in the county that will negatively impact community patrolling and create increases in response times resulting in elevating the risk of harm and loss to people and property.
- In the wake of 9-11 the County Homeland Security Commission identified and then pursued gaps in homeland security and Emergency Management preparations and capital equipment. Over a decade of

hard work has transformed County Emergency Operations from a Mom and Pop operation working out of a trailer to a first class state of the art operation. We still lack in full implementation of community response and recovery and in the ability to withstand sustained outages of the primary power grid.

- We know that community policing and community probation services in the neighborhoods improve public safety. There are several neighborhoods where creating a neighborhood probation operation will improve public safety and improve the success rate of the CIRV project.

I propose that we use the four separate budgets that we adopt each year as the sources of funding for the building blocks of the aforementioned Priority Goals. Through these four budgets [in combination thereof] my policy objectives for 2016 and beyond will be presented and implemented.

### III. Policy Budget Revenue Proposals

To begin, I look to augment the revenues available to cover the 2016 budget by:

- Adopting a Resolution to Create Ohio's First Healthier Buckeye Council under authority of ORC section 355.02 and to seek funding available thereunder to support recommendations related to Poverty eradication; and the implementation of a new Office of Economic inclusion, Contract Compliance and Full Employment. **Probable positive revenue impact: \$ 250,000.00 in 2015 Grant Request and**
- Revising the General Fund recommendations and assumptions in the Administrator's recommended budget by:
  - A. Adopting an additional 1% Sales Tax revenue receipt for 2016; **Probable positive revenue impact: \$ 770,000.00; and**

- B. Rightsizing sales tax collections for the balance of 2015. **Probable positive revenue impact: \$ 1.1 Million; and**
  - C. Removing from application of a 3% salary adjustment those county departments that unilaterally already increased salaries during 2015. **Probable positive revenue impact: \$250,000.00; and**
  - D. Introducing “Truth in Budgeting” that will keep departmental spending at budgeted levels instead of continuing the practice of budget anarchy that has empowered departments to overspend each year and that has failed to accurately estimate revenue levels in anticipation of needing the inevitable “extra” revenues to cover such overspending. **Probable positive revenue impact: \$ 2.5 Million; and**
  - E. Maintaining reliance on certain restricted funds in 2016 to cover expenses in the Treasurer and Prosecutor’s Offices and at the Probate Court. **Probable positive revenue impact: \$ 750,000.00**
- Relying upon unobligated capacity in the Indigent Care, Recovery and Developmental Disability Services, Children’s and Mental Health levies to support specific public health related initiatives. **Probable positive revenue impact: \$ 574,000.00**
  - Relying upon unobligated capacity in the Children’s Services Levy to:
    - 1.) support an immediate increase in salaries of JFS employees who earn poverty wages for the purpose of elevating their salaries to above the federal poverty level; and



2.) Complete the implementation of the reforms recommended in summer 2015 in the wake of Glenara Bates death; and to

3.) Implement recommendations arising out of the Coalition to end Childhood Poverty and County wide Anti Childhood Poverty Summit. **Probable positive revenue impact: \$ 250,000.00 for summit; \$1.6 Million for reforms implementation; and \$10 Million (+) for childhood poverty reduction proposals.**

- Relying Upon the MSD Operating Budget to ensure adequate funding exists to support the county's efforts in Washington DC and nationally to lead to adoption of HR 1093, the Clean Water Act Ratepayer Affordability Act of 2016. **Probable positive revenue impact: \$250,000.00**

- Using all casino revenues for economic development related initiatives **Probable positive revenue impact: \$4.0 Million**

- Utilization of Utility Fee at 1% residential and 1.5% industrial/commercial. **Probable positive revenue impact: \$5 Million.**

- Utilization of unobligated balance in Riverfront Parking Fund for riverfront and Banks related improvements arising from Full utilization of the Downtown Intermodal Transit Center to be used for work in 2016 on connection of Oasis rail and trail corridor to the Banks and to Transit Center. **Recommended probable positive budget impact \$1Million.**

#### IV. 2016 Policy Budget Revisions

Through the Policy initiatives discussed below – additions to the existing proposed budgets by Administrator Sigman, or the individual proposals separately offered by Commission President Greg Hartmann and Commission Vice President Chris Monzel – I envision the County can use 2016 as a focused starting point that will advance the kind of urgent



action steps required of the county to make an material impact on the above discussed priorities. In each priority policy category I offer these:

**A. Creating a vibrant economy in Hamilton County.**

1. Adopting a Resolution to Create Ohio's First Healthier Buckeye Council under authority of ORC section and to seek funding available thereunder to support my recommendations related to Poverty eradication; and the implementation of a new Office of Economic inclusion, Contract Compliance and Full Employment. \$250,000.00 grant request for poverty summit made on or before December 31, 2015 and \$2.5 Million grant request to implement recommendations from County wide Summit in 2016. Sources: \$250,000.00 from Ohio Healthier Buckeye Council fund in 2015 and \$2,500,000.00 from Ohio Healthier Buckeye Council fund in 2016.

2. Making available the sum of \$3 Million annually from the combination of Casino and General Fund dollars to the HCTID for the purpose of joint action with the Port Authority for space identification and development and transportation access to the same; to preserve transit corridors and to eliminate gaps in access to Port and Barge terminal facilities and transportation modalities for the purpose of enhancing the County's ability to market itself as the inland port of choice. Sources: \$2 Million from Casino funds and \$1 Million from County General Fund.

3. \$ 3.0 Million annually to the HCTID for the purpose of increasing the number of jobs that are accessible by transit; to increase the number of jobs accessible through pedestrian and bicycle trails; to continue ITN Greater Cincinnati providing transportation options for people with disabilities that is complementary to ACCESS service operated by SORTA; and to initiate connectivity to the Banks and Intermodal Transit Center on and along the Oasis Line from the Boathouse to the Downtown Intermodal Transit Center. Sources: \$2 Million from Casino funds for linkages of jobs and transit/transportation infrastructure enhancement and \$1 Million from County

Riverfront Parking Fund for connectivity to the Banks and into the Transit Center at the Banks.

4. An additional \$100,000.00 to HCDC to enhance its Gardening Program to implement the UC Economics Center Study of ROI of targeted economic investment and to identify the niche businesses the county needs to pursue. Sources: \$100,000.00 from County General Fund.
5. \$100,000.00 to HCDC to **create a new Department of Innovation and Creativity** within the Incubator and at HCDC to facilitate new progressive startup businesses, technologies and revenue opportunities such as how to make Hamilton County the Center of Excellence in Alternative Energy adaptations for home, office, emergency and automotive use; or to create urban farming opportunities including growth of industrial hemp as a cash crop in Ohio. Sources: \$100,000.00 from County General Fund.
6. \$300,000.00 to Hamilton County Administration to fund and create a **new Office of Economic Inclusion; WBE, MBE, DBE and SBE Compliance and Full Employment**. This needed office in Hamilton County will promote inclusion, local contracting and local hiring in Hamilton County through lawful and enforceable policies. It will either directly oversee, or work in collaboration with others, to guarantee the oversight of contractor compliance with federal, state and local rules, statutes and regulations that govern issues of workplace safety; workplace hiring and compensation issues; that root out **Wage Theft** by contractors or employers; and that will work at remedying all violations of the same, including pursuit of debarment of contractors found in violation pursuant to previously adopted county policies. Sources: \$100,000.00 from MSD funds and \$200,000.00 from County General Fund.

## B. Improving the General Health and Welfare of the County

1. Regarding *Cradle Cincinnati* to add to the unobligated surpluses of the Indigent Care Levy the ability to tap into the unobligated surpluses of the Children's Services Levy and the Recovery and Developmental Disability Services Levy [as was the historic precedent in obtaining county support for OMIHIMRR the Office of Maternal and Infant Health and Infant Mortality Rate Reduction] for the purpose of making \$250,000.00 available to Cradle Cincinnati in 2016 for Cradle's work in reducing Infant Mortality in Hamilton County.
2. To rely upon unobligated capacity in the Indigent Care, Recovery and Developmental Disability Services, Children's and Mental Health levies to support the attached public health initiative aimed at reducing the Hamilton County Cancer Fatality rate with full first year funding of \$75,000.00; and
3. To rely upon unobligated capacity in the Indigent Care, Recovery and Developmental Disability Services, Children's and Mental Health levies to support the attached public health initiative aimed at reducing the lack of access to Dental care and Oral Hygiene in Cincinnati through the implementation of the attached Dental Needs Assessment program of services via collaborating with UC Health under the Umbrella of the County appointed Dental Needs Task Force called for in the Report and recommendation at levels not to exceed \$150,000.00 for 2016.
4. Relying Upon the MSD Operating Budget to ensure adequate funding exists to support the county's efforts in Washington DC and nationally to lead to adoption of HR 1093, the Clean Water Act Ratepayer Affordability Act of 2016. Adoption of the Act has the capacity to save county ratepayers as much as \$1 Billion in consent decree obligated work. Adoption of the Act will better position Hamilton County to be able to negotiate from a position of strength all Phase II Consent Decree obligations when such negotiations commence in 2017 or before.

5. Relying upon unobligated capacity [total amounts required are subject of further discussions with HCJFS] in the Children's Services Levy to:
  - 1.) support an immediate increase in salaries of JFS employees who earn poverty wages for the purpose of elevating their salaries to above the federal poverty level; and
  - 2.) Complete the implementation of the reforms recommended in summer 2015 in the wake of Glenara Bates death; and to
  - 3.) Implement recommendations arising out of the Coalition to end Childhood Poverty and County wide Anti Childhood Poverty Summit.

**C. Continuing the Progress we have made in making the County a Safer Place to live and work and play.**

1. To add funding to the Hamilton County Adult Probation Department in an amount to be determined for the purpose of expanding the Neighborhood Offices of Adult Probation in an effort designed to curb violent crime, including homicide in the City of Cincinnati under CIRV and elsewhere in Hamilton County.
2. To the Sheriff of Hamilton County the sum of \$150,000.00 to cover the cost of all local match required in order to equip and train all County Sheriff's Deputies as determined by the discretion of the Hamilton County Sheriff with Body Cameras where such use is needed; and
3. To implement the vetting of available technology[ies] that will introduce alternative sources of power into each neighborhood community in Hamilton County; to critical care operations providing materials goods and services necessary for the preservation of life in the county; and for all critical public

operations. Anticipated consulting cost to be no more than \$50,000.00.

Thank you for considering these various budget recommendations and revisions. I look forward to continuing to work on advancing the budget toward a targeted goal of adopting a budget by November 23, 2015.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Portune', written over a horizontal line.

Todd Portune  
Hamilton County Commissioner